MARCH 2016

A.S. L

Meiassis Dragon

THE BARONY OF DRAGONSSPINE

"Everything is Aiming"

The Archery Issue

Table of Contents/Local Happenings

Regular Local Gatherings 3
Upcoming Events 3
Business Meeting Minutes 4
Battlemoor Museum 4
Crown Tournament Information 5
Make Your Own Arrows
By: THL Christophe of Grey 6
Precision Arrow Matching
By: Sir Jon Fitz Rauf 8
Buying A Used Bow
By: THL Cristophe of Grey 11
Getting Into SCA Target Archery
By: THL Christophe of Grey 12
Getting in Shape for Archery
By: THL Christophe of Grey 13
Handbow vs. Crossbow
By: THL: Christophe of Grey 15
Bow and Buckler Competition
By: Sir Jon Fitz Rauf 16
Teaching Archery to Children
By: Magnus Malleus 17
Target-less Practice
By: Sir Jon Fitz Rauf 19
Defensive Combat Archery Techniques
By: Sir Jon Fitz Rauf 19
Trouble Shooting
By: THL Christophe of Grey 22
Officers and Baronial Court 23

By: Lady of Bree Pye of Caer Galen

Regular Local Gatherings

Fighter Practice
Thursday
Winter: Westside Center
6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Summer: Bear Creek Park
6:00 pm to dark
Sunday Afternoon
Various Parks in Monument

Archery Practice
Sir Ton's Field (Black Forest)
Sundays
1:00-4:00 pm
Weather Dependent
Bear Creek Park
Thursdays
6:00 pm
Summer Only

Business Meeting
At the first fighter practice each month
7:00 pm

Sewing Workshops
(also possible woodshop space)
Maitresse Mathilde's
Briargate area
2nd and 4th Sundays
1:00-5:00 pm

Armouring Night
Count Thorbrandr's
Northwestern Black Forest
1st, 3rd, and 5th Tuesdays
7:00-9:00 pm

A&S/Largesse Workshops
Lady Adelaisa's house
Fountain Area
3rd and 5th weeks
1:00-5:00 pm

Dance Practice
Westside Community Center
7-9 pm

All meetings in private homes may be cancelled or changed at the host's discretion. Please keep an eye on the Facebook Page for the most up to date information.

Upcoming Events

March 2016		
12	Citadel of the Southern Pass	Crown Tournament#*
12-20	Glenn Abhann	Gulf Wars#
April 2016		
2	Dragonsspine	Feast of Fools*
9	Saint Golias	Kingdom A&S
16	Caerthe	Dungeons and Dragons
23	Caerthe	Caerthen Dance Collegium
29-1	Artemesia	Known World Heraldic and Scribal Symposium
30	Unser Hafen	Unser Hafen Investiture*#
30	al-Barran	Albuquerque Renaissance Faire
May 2016		
7	Dragonsspine	May Day*
7-8	Nahrun Kabirun	Masquerade Ball
14-15	Aarquelle	Coronation#*
26-30	al-Barran	Grand Outlandish VLIII
27-30	Caerthe	The Siege at Inlandish
June 2016		
3-5	Dragonsspine	Champions#
17-27	Society	SCA 50th Year Celebration
23-26	Plattefordham	Northern Realm War*
30-4	Drygestan	Keepers of Dry Stone#
July 2016		
1-3	Unser Hafen	Heroes and Legends
8-10	Caer Galen	Caer Galen Defender

events on TRM progress * events on TE Dragonsspine progress

Buisness Meeting Minutes

Dragonsspine Baronial Meeting

February 4, 2016

Meeting led by Don Gianni Sangermano, Seneschal

Candlemas: This was a great success: full report will be given next month. His Excellency Broddi said it was one of the best feasts he has ever had!

Baronial Business:

Don Sangermano, Seneschal: Please note that the Barony of Dragonsspine is looking for people to fill these offices: Chatelaine, Golden Key and Quarter Master. Please send your letters of intent to Don Sangermano and His Excellency Broddi if you are interested. Please make sure Sanger has your phone number if you are an officer in case of closures or other important information.

Webmaster: Not in attendance. If you are an officer you will receive an email from Sanger; you should be receiving these by now; please let him know if you did not get this email.

Lady Abigail, Exchequer: Reported the barony has over $12,500 in the bank. She is looking into a larger facility. Right now the barony pays $80.00 every Thursday night. She encourages people to consider donating on a regular basis to cover the cost of the facility; otherwise the money has to come out of the barony monies. Also all inventories need to be in the shed and accounted for ASAP. The change for every office needing a budget is coming soon.

Duchess Selene, Herald gave her report on where peoples name and devices are on the kingdom level as far as being approved or not. There was a Skype Heraldry meeting Jan 20 that she and Deputy Lady Liliona attended which was very informative and interesting. Just a reminder that court Heralds need to send her who received what awards. Thank you.

Lord Turlough, Knight Marshall: reported that there are on an average 17 rapier fighters at practices and about 7 to 8 heavy fighters. There have been no injuries. 14 people entered the tournament at Candlemas. Count Thorbrandr Olafsson won heavy and Don Hawk won the rapier.

Lord Antoine, Rapier Marshall: talked about finding a bigger place for practices as the gym gets pretty crowded. The fighters had also suggested their practice be on a different date. Also he would like people to consider starting practice earlier in the summer at about 4. This will give everyone more time to actually practice before the sun goes down. His Excellency Broddi said he is in favor of this.

Mistress Lydia, Minister of A & S: The Baronial A&S will be held October 29 this year. There will be 3 categories: Medieval head coverings, medieval woodwork and illumination!!

Chronicler: not in attendance.

His Excellency Broddi did not have anything to add.

Congratulations to everyone who got an award at Candlemas; well done and well deserved!

Meeting adjourned 6:55 pm.

YIS, Lady Liliona Hampton

Greetings,

This year at Battlemoor there will be a museum that will celebrate the 30 year history of our mighty kingdom. To that end I am looking for items to display that will help to capture some of our kingdom's glorious history and pre-history. Such pieces can include (but not be limited to): regalia, scrolls, event flyers, gatebooks, Outlandish Heralds, pictures, A&S projects, significant group documents, etc. If you have some of the aforementioned items which you are willing to loan and/or copy please contact me.

Please know that we are making arrangments to protect the artifacts as much as possible. This includes (and again not limited to) being within a sturdy and enclosed tent, using protective display mounts (such as plastic coverings), and setting them off the ground on sturdy tables and display boards. We can work with you on any particular concerns that you may have. We can similarly work with you on transporting the items. Additionally, if you are interested in being a curator or docent for this display, please contact me. I would like to have a grand display and therefore will need assistance.

I hope that you can help make this museum truly spectacular. If nothing else, do come prepared to feast your eyes on a collective and great history.

YIS, Master Jethro Stille

Crown Tournament Event Information

Crown Tournament Information

May 13 - 15, 2016

Site opens Friday at 3:00PM
and closes Sunday at 5:00PM

The Abbey Events Complex,
2951 East US Highway 50,
Cañon City, CO 81212

Event Steward:

The Honorable Lady Generica McKenna (mka Terry Dawson)

Directions:

Follow the King's Highway (I-25) to Pueblo. Take exit 101 and head west on Highway 50 toward Canon City for approximately 34 miles. The Abbey is on the right side of the highway as you are entering Canon City. The site is wet. There is a winery and tasting room on site. There will be a cash bar available at feast. Drink responsibly or the event steward will mock you mercilessly for the next year.

Site Fees:

Adult: $12 PreReg; $15 at the gate
Ages 5-17: $6
Under 5 yrs: Free
$5 Non-Member Surcharge applies
Feast: $15

Event Description:

Join us at the beautiful Holy Cross Abbey in Canon City, Colorado for Spring Coronation. The site is a former monastery located about 35 miles west of I-25 at Pueblo on US-50 at an elevation of 5330 feet. The Abbey features Gothic and Tudor style facades in a setting of green lawns and trees. We have the abbey with the chapel and many small gathering rooms as well as the extensive grounds available. Working around the court schedule will be a Faire Environment.

Shires, Baronies, Households and Guilds will be encouraged to set up booths with opportunities to teach classes, provide entertainment, etc. The jewelers, lampworkers, equestrians, bookbinders and scribes have confirmed they will be attending. Merchants will be there as well. The Battlemoor autocrats will host a meeting. If anyone else wishes to reserve meeting space, please contact the event steward and she will do whatever she needs to make your meeting/demo/sales booth/ donation lunch etc. a success.

The Abbey has limited double occupancy twin bed rooms available starting at $41/night. They will also open the field house to people who wish to camp indoors with showers and bathrooms for $8.50/night. RV hookups begin at $15/night. Contact the Abbey directly for these details at 719-275-8631. There are also hotels in the immediate vicinity, ranging from 1950's style holiday motels to a Quality Inn, a Super 8, a Best Western and a Hampton Inn. If you are required to attend as either a kingdom officer, visiting royalty or territorial baron/ baroness, please contact the event steward before making hotel arrangements.

The Abbey will allow food from offsite to be served outdoors. They, in consultation with Mistress Liepa, are creating the evening feast. Details will be posted as they become available. Animals on leashes are allowed outside the buildings. Pueblo is 35 miles away as well. Saint Thomas More Hospital is only three miles away.

TENTATIVE Schedule of Activities:

Friday, 13 May

Friday Night Faire Fights
6:00-8:00 Come join Lady Zephyr fighting the animals in the Faire. Tentatively, there will be bear, boar, alligator and rabbit pits.

Friday Night Court—To Be Decided

Saturday, 14 May

Coronation Ceremonies and the Faire Day: Follow a traditional Coronation Day Schedule Day: Around the court schedule will be a Faire Environment.

Shires, Baronies, Households, Merchants and Guilds will be encouraged to set up booths/opportunities to teach classes, provide entertainment, sell wares, etc …

During the day, the Battlemoor autocrat and populace meeting In the evening: The Abbey will serve a professionally prepared feast for approximately $15 per person

Sunday, 15 May

Tournaments Queen's Favor Tournament (Heavy), Protector of the Queens Heart (Rapier),
Defender of the Queen (C&T)

http://www.theabbeycc.com

Make Your Own Arrows

By: THL Christophe of Grey

Make Your Own Arrows

by The Honorable Christophe of Grey

In past articles I've talked about matching the spine of your arrows to the draw weight of your bow. This is important for good performance from your equipment. Most good archers make their own arrows. In the end you wind up with a better arrow, more personalized, and slightly cheaper than buying them. Besides, in the SCA we must use wood shafted arrows with feather fletches, which are often very difficult to find in stores. So how do you make a good arrow?

It begins with the shafting. You can get arrow shafting from spruce, douglas fir, bamboo, birch, ash, hickory, maple, poplar, purple heart, and cherry. There is even a Canadian company that has a shaft made of five wedge shaped pieces glued together. But the most common is Port Oxford Cedar. You can get shafting in 1/4, 5/16, 11/32. or 23/64 inch diameter and spine weights in 5 pound lots. Diameter is a personal choice but typically a lighter arrow is made out of 5/16 while a slightly heavier arrow is made out of 11/32. For a longbow match the spine to the bow draw weight. For a recurve, go 10 pounds heavier than the bow draw weight. Typically the raw shafts are 32 inches long. I stain or paint the shafts before I cut them.

The shafts need a finish applied to them. Use stains or paints designed for wood. Leather stains also work well. You can wipe the stain on using a rag dipped in the stain or construct a dip tube out of a plastic golf tube with a plug in one end. Dipping typically works best with paint. Hang the shaft to dry for a day or two. Apply two coats of clear finish. I use wipe on polyurethane but again, you can use the dip tube method. After the final coat, let the shafts hang in a dry place for at least one day, two is better.

Next cut the shafts to your draw length plus 2 inches. I like to make my arrows a tad long so if I break a point off I can re-point the arrow and still use it. Measure your draw length by placing a yardstick against your breastbone. Hold both hands straight out in front of you, palm to palm with the yardstick between your palms. Your draw length is the distance of your farthest fingertips. There are nice, but expensive machines for cutting the shafts but I use a hack saw. You want a nice clean cut.

The next task is to taper both ends of the shaft. You will need a special tool for this as the taper on the nock end is different that the taper on the point end. It does matter which end you put the nock on. Look at the shaft.

Make Your Own Arrows

You should see small chevrons in the wood grain. You want these chevrons to be opening towards the front of the shaft. Taper both ends then glue the nocks on.

When you glue on the nocks you want the bowstring to be perpendicular to the grain of the wood. Orient the nock so the slot is crosswise to the grain of the shaft when you apply it. I use Fletch Tight to put my nocks on. That way, if I get lucky and Robin Hood an arrow breaking off the nock, I can replace it. Let the nocks set for a few hours.

Your next step is very important. You will need a fletching jig to properly position the fletches on the shaft. But first, let's talk fletches. You can get them in just about any color you would like – personal choice. They come in a variety of shapes, parabolic, shield, banana, traditional and 2, 4, 5, 5 1/2 inches long. Some look more period than others. The thing to remember is the purpose of the fletch is to stabilize the arrow in flight. Larger fletches stabilize quicker but cause more friction with the air and shorter distances, while smaller fletches, less stability, less friction, longer flight. For the distances we shot in the SCA, flight distance is not an issue.

You can mount your fletches straight, where the length of the fletch is aligned with the center line of the arrow shaft. Or diagonal, where the length of the fletch is at an angle to the center line of the shaft. Or helical, where the fletch is "twisted" along the length of the shaft. Diagonal and helical impart a spiral to the arrow in flight, helical more spiral than diagonal. Some feel this adds to the accuracy of the arrow.

Your next consideration is whether to use right or left wing fletches. It really doesn't matter but you must use fletches cut from the same wing for the same arrow. If you choose to mount your fletches helical style then the helical twist must match the wing fletch, i.e. for left helical, use left wing fletch.

There are many glues on the market for applying your fletching. Fletch Tight is probably the most popular. Put the fletch in the jig clamp, apply a generous bead of glue then put the clamp in the jig making sure the base of the fletch is in contact with the entire arrow shaft. Leave it in place for about 10 minutes. When you remove the clamp spread the jaws as you lift the clamp off. Using Fletch Tight takes me about 1 – 2 days to do a dozen arrows – apply fletch, do other things, next fletch. Using fletch tape is much faster. Apply the fletch, immediately go to the next fletch. I can now do a dozen arrows in about 1 hour.

After you have applied the fletches and allowed them to dry, put a drop of Fletch Tight at the leading point of each fletch. This will help to prevent your fletches from being striped off should your arrow pass through a target.

Your final step is to apply the points. For an arrow made from a 11/32 shaft I use 125 grain points. For 5/16, I use a 100 grain point. You want your arrows to balance approximately 10% of total length forward of the shaft center point, measured end to end. Your arrow will fly truest with this as the balance point. To prepare your points put them in alcohol then burn it off. This removes the machining oils left on the points. Next I take a Dremel tool with a burr head and rough up the inside on the point. Boening makes a hot melt glue for applying points. I put a blob of glue on the shafts then heat the point while reheating the glue on the shaft then press the point on the shaft, wipe off the excess glue that blurbs out and dip it in a glass of water to cool.

A better method is to prepare the points as above but glue them on using two-ton epoxy glue. You cannot salvage your points from broken shafts but your points will not pull of in stiff targets.

By: Lady of Bree Pye of Caer Galen

Precision Arrow Matching

By: Sir Jon fitz Rauf, RCA, RCY

Precision Arrow Matching

by Sir Jon Fitz-Rauf, R.C.A., R.C.Y.

If you have a set of properly matched arrows you can greatly improve your archery scores. Most archers think that if they buy a set of matched wood arrows from a supplier that they are fully matched. However the arrows are only matched in weight (within five grains), diameter (all five sixteenths or eleven thirty seconds, etc.) and spline (within five pounds-twenty five to thirty or thirty to thirty five, etc.). So you see that they are not matched exactly.

These variations will cause your arrows to strike in slightly different locations even though you aim them all at exactly the same spot and release them in exactly the same manner. They will not group in the same pattern.

If your arrows are not grouping in a good pattern and you are a beginner, you will have a hard time improving your scores. This is because out of a set of twelve, you may have perhaps six of them that group in the center, two that hit high, two that hit low and one each hitting left or right. If you are shooting and your first two arrows go in the gold, but your next one goes high, you may try to adjust by aiming lower on the next shot. But this next arrow may be one of the two that hit low anyway. The result is, rather than hitting in the Gold, you are in the white at six o'clock. So now you correct by aiming higher, but that arrow is one that goes wide to the left and your arrow strikes high and to the left. And so on... to your total frustration.

Now that is if you are shooting a set of store matched arrows. But if you are shooting, as many novices do, with a set of arrows of different: diameters, lengths, weight, spline, and fletching, then your results will be so inconsistent that you will not be able to tell what you are doing right or wrong. You will take a long time to improve, if you have not given up before that point. If you are past the novice stage, then you will be able to make a marked increase in your scores.

The way for you to achieve good scores is through consistency. A consistent stance, draw, aim and release. Your equipment must also be consistent as well. If you use different bows, tabs, gloves or arrows, you will change the way shoot and have to correct for the equipment. You will find that this is not conducive to good learning.

If you are serious about improving your scores, you need to practice consistently with your own bow, glove or tab, bracer and your own set of precision matched arrows.

The first step in precision matching your arrows is to purchase or make the best set of matched arrows you can. You must make sure that they are the right spline for your bow and the correct length for your draw. If you are not sure, then ask an experienced archer to assist you in your selection. You should get a full set of twelve arrows if you can afford it. If not, then you need to have at least six arrows to shoot most competitions. However, since some of the arrows you buy will not group with most of the others, you should buy more than you need to make a full set, plus the sad fact that you will lose and break some of them. If you want a set of twelve, you should buy eighteen or nine if you want a set of six. If you are lucky most of them will group well and you will have spares.

Now if you are a beginner go out and practice with this set until you are good enough to keep your arrows grouped on the scoring face of the target at twenty yards. If you can already do this then you can precision match your arrows. Or if you are a beginner and have a friend who is a good archer, capable of keeping most of their arrows within the blue at twenty yards (or better) ask them to do the shooting for the matching for you.

There are two steps you must do before you precision match your arrows. First: you should number each of your arrows (one through nine, twelve or whatever). Write the number just in front of the cock feather, so that you can see it when you nock the arrow. Second: You will need to make a sheet to record where your arrows strike. Divide a unlined sheet of eight and one half by eleven paper into six equal boxes with a pen. Then draw, using a compass, a target face in each box. The targets will have a center (gold) of one quarter inch radius with the remaining rings having a radius one quarter inch larger. You will end up with a target of five concentric rings, just like the Royal Round or IKAC targets. Now you should have your original Xeroxed. You need to make enough so that there is one target face for each of your arrows. And you might as well make some for

Precision Arrow Matching

future use as well. Now write a number for each of your arrows in the corner of each box.

Before you go to the range, you can make the matching easier by adding some accessories that are not used in SCA archery. You can tape an bow sight to the back of your bow and may add a peep sight to your string as well. The addition of the bow sight will help to eliminate errors in aiming. You can also place something to use as an aiming mark, so that when your arrow tip is on the target at full draw you arrows should center on the gold. This is not needed, but can reduce the number of times you need to shoot each arrow to get a good sampling. You are not testing your skill, but the grouping of your arrows.

Now you are ready to match your arrows. You use a standard five ring target, just like you drew on your record sheet. Now take your stand at twenty yards (or further, depending on your skill). This can be done at less than twenty if space does not allow, but your groups will be tighter and bad arrows not as easy to determine. Now you shoot your arrows, taking care to maintain good form, a consistent aim and release and take note of the number of each arrow. If, as you are shooting you make a poor shot due to error on your part, remember or write down the number of the arrow so that you can reshoot it. When you have shot all your shafts, go to the target with your record sheet and as you draw your arrows mark where each arrow hit in its corresponding numbered target face. For example: The first arrow you pull is number five and it struck the target face in the red at three o'clock. You then make mark on the number five target on the record sheet in the second ring at three o'clock. Then the next arrow is number two and it hit the blue at two o'clock. You would then mark the number two target in the third ring at two o'clock. etc. You do this for all your arrows, except for any bad shots that you know were due to an error in aim or release on your part. These can either then be reshot or ignored for the time being.

This process should be repeated until you have shot all your arrows at least ten times. This allows you to determine an average impact area for each arrow. However the shooting need not be done all in one secession, if you are getting tired and are unsteady the arrows will be going wild and will not be a accurate sample. It is better to take two or three secessions and be accurate.

When you have completed the ten shots per arrow and recorded them on the record sheet you will see a pattern emerge for each arrow. For example arrow number five may have a group of seven hits between the red and the blue from two to four o'clock, with three other arrows falling somewhere outside of that group. Those three were just bad shots on your part and can be ignored in the sample. The next arrow is number two and has a group of eight hits between the red and gold and from two to four o'clock, with two strays. Then there is arrow nine which groups nine hits between the blue and the black between eight and ten o'clock.

You should find that most of your arrows will tend to group in the same general area like numbers two and five, with a few like number nine and perhaps even one or two that have miss completely or are all over the face of the target. Any arrow that has no definite pattern should be discarded. The arrows that group, but stay off of the scoring face of the target may be either the wrong spline or weight, use these for another bow that they match. You can now take the remaining arrows that have the same general grouping and pick your precision matched set out of those that group around a common point. The arrows do not need to group around the center or gold to make a good set. If the set groups in the red and blue between two and four, then all you have to to is change your aiming point to the left, the same distance that the center of the group is to the right of the gold.

You may still be able to correct and use some of the arrows that did not group with the set. You can do this by examining the arrow's straightness, the alignment of the point, nock and the fletching. If the shaft is not straight, the arrow will not shoot straight. You can check for straightness by aligning the shaft against a yard stick and noting if the arrow is bent. If it is, then mark the high side of the shaft, so that you will know which way to rebend it. Use a heat source such as a stove burner on low, but be careful not to scorch the shaft or finish. Hold the shaft, using both hands with your thumbs on the mark, about a foot above the burner and as it warms up gently bend it straight. Then check it against the yard stick and repeat as necessary.

If the point of the arrow does not appear

Precision Arrow Matching

straight, then you should heat it over a low flame till the glue is soft and then using a pair of pliers reseat it.

There some problems you may find with the nock. First and most common is that it is too tight on the bow string. It may have a different sound from the other arrows when shot. Also it may have tended to fish-tail or wag from side to side as it left the bow. You can cure this by dipping the nock end of shaft in boiling water for about fifteen seconds, or until the nock is pliable. Then you fit it to the string of your strung bow so that it just hangs on, but will fall off if you give the string a light tap. If it is too loose, then it may fall off in the haste of speed shooting. If the shafts are not painted so that you can see the grain of the shaft, you should check to see that the nock slot is perpendicular to the grain of the shaft. They should all be the same, preferably perpendicular, but not mixed. If possible buy unpainted, but varnished, shafts so you can examine the grain. You should remove and replace nocks as needed so that they all are mounted the same.

By: Lady of Bree Pye of Caer Galen

For the fletching you should first check to see that the fletches are all the same size as each other and those on the arrows of the precision set, or if they are missing sections of the fletch If so, replace them with matching fletches. You need to check for damaged fletches. Are they glued tightly and smoothly to the shaft. Reglue as needed. The feathers also need to be of the same hand. This means that when you look at them, on the shaft, from the end they must all have a slight curve, all in the same direction. And all the arrows of the set must have fletches of the same hand as well. An arrow which has unmatched fletches will not fly true. And an arrow which has fletches of a different hand than the others in a set may not group the same. If the fletches are matted or bent, you can correct this by steaming them over the spout of a tea kettle. It is a good general practice during the shooting season to check for arrow straightness and matted fletches and straighten and steam as needed.

It is possible to use the arrows that do not match the precision set. What you need to do is know where you have to aim that arrow to group with the others. You can either memorize the corrective aiming point for each arrow or you can mark each one with a code indicating where to aim. For example, you can mark the the shaft by the cock feather, where you will be able to see it when you nock the arrow. The code "3/9" would indicate that you need to aim in the third ring (blue) at nine o'clock in order to hit the gold. Another method is to write o'clock figure "9" on a blue band, this is easier to read in speed rounds.

You should repeat the precision matching process whenever your arrows do not seem to be grouping well. The numbering of the shafts also helps you to identify any arrows that are striking outside the group and to repair or remove them.

Now that you have spent your time matching your arrows, make sure they stay that way. Do not stuff them into your quiver and then jam them into the hot trunk of your car under all your tourney gear. One way to protect them is to build a set of spacers for use in your quiver. You will need some belt or sole leather large enough for you to cut out two spacers the size and shape of the inside of your quiver. You should make these measurements about two inches from the top and four from the bottom of your quiver if it tapers. You should mark the top and bottom spacers for reference. Then using a leather punch, the diameter of your shafts, make a pattern of holes so that the fletches will not touch the inside of the quiver or each other (make sure the patterns match on both spacers). If there is room, punch more holes for extra arrows. Slide the top spacer on first so that it will fit a inch or two from the top of the quiver. Then slide the bottom spacer on to about four inches past the points and insert the set into your quiver.

Buying a Used Bow

By: THL Christopher of Grey

Buying a Used Bow

by The Honorable Christophe of Grey

You have decided it's time to jump in and join those folks on the archery range who are having such a good time. You start browsing through catalogs looking at bows. First thing you notice is that there just are not a lot of outlets for traditional archery gear. And those that you do find, it seems the cost of the equipment is pretty expensive. All true statements. But let's not rule out the possibility of stumbling onto a fantastic find at a garage sale, flea market, or thrift store. Question is, how do you know it's a good bow?

If you have spent some time with the catalogs and/or web sites, you probably know some of the names of good and popular bowyers. Names like Bear, Martin and Pearson. Of course there are many, many more but these are a few of the biggest. Often if you find one of their bows you can look it up on the internet to determine the original value and sometimes present value.

But still, how do you know THAT bow is a good bow? Start by looking the bow over, checking for any obvious cracks or delaminating. Many bows are composite layers of wood and fiberglass. As the layers begin to delaminate, small gaps will form on the edge of the bow limbs. If you can get your fingernail in these gaps the bow is probably beginning to delaminate.

Running you fingers up and down the limbs will locate fiberglass that is about to break. As the fiberglass stresses to breakage some of the fibers begin to stick up. Often you can feel them before you can see them. Often fiberglass reinforced bows have what appear to be cracks that run in the same direction as the bow limb, not crosswise. These are not cracks and do not indicate bow limb failure. You may see very small lines that do run crosswise to the limbs. These are typically crazing in the glaze or finish coat of the limb and not an indication of limb failure. Think of that china that looks like it's all cracked but still works. Same idea.

Next sight down the bow from limb tip to limb tip. You are looking for any twist to the bow limbs, which will be most obvious towards the end of the limb tips. If the bow has a string, string it. Now slowly draw the bow and slowly relax it down. As you make that first draw, listen for any cracking, creaking noises in the bow. You are also looking to see that the string returns to the center of the bow limb tip. Do this several times. Bows with twisted limbs will actually "walk" the string to one side or the other of the limb tip. Now in full draw have someone else look at the bow sideways, or do this in a mirror. What you are looking for is do both limbs curve the same? You don't want one limb curving more than the other.

If the string is in bad shape, don't worry about it, you can get a replacement. If there is no bow string, try to flex the limbs and look for any fibers sticking up. Leather grips and arrow rests can be replaced.

If the bow has a crack in the riser, the built up handle part, it is possible to repair using bowyers epoxy. However, this takes a little expertise so consider that. I have three bows that have come to me through various outlets. One bow has a current market value of $250 and I got it for $20! It shoots very nice and is my current favorite bow. Look around, there are some amazing finds in garage sales and flea markets. Just know what you are buying!

By: Lady of Bree Pye of Caer Galen

Getting Into SCA Target Archery

By: THL Christophe of Grey

Getting Into SCA Target Archery

by The Honorable Christophe of Grey

Well, maybe this is a little backwards, and should have been the first article in this series, but I think there is still some good information for those of you already into archery. So you want to become an SCA target archer? Let's deal with the first question, "How much is this going to cost me?" For about $175 you're in! $100 for your bow, $60 for a dozen arrows, and $15 for arm guard and glove/tab.

Bows – If you can, shoot other people's bows before you buy a bow. Long bows, recurves, reflex/deflex, and horse bows all shoot differently. My starting estimate was based on the Victory take down recurve model commonly available. This is a fiberglass reinforced bow and a very good bow for the price. The bow breaks down into three pieces making transport easy. These bows are available from 20 pound draw up to 35 pounds. Don't let friends "advise" you that you "need" a 40 or 50 pound draw bow. A 35 pound bow set up correctly can fling an arrow over 100 yards and in the SCA that is the farthest you will ever shoot. Your bow will come with a string however I would strongly encourage you to get a spare. Strings do break.

By: Lady of Bree Rye of Caer Galen

Used bows – You can find some fantastic bows in flea markets and garage sales. BUT KNOW WHAT YOU ARE BUYING! Check the bow for fiberglass splitting as evidenced by sharp fibers that stick in your fingers when you run them up and down the limbs. Check the limbs to make sure they are not twisted. Also check the limbs to make sure they flex the same. That is the bow should make a consistent arch when drawn. If the bow does not have a string nor an arrow rest, no biggie. You can get replacements. Also check the draw weight and if it has a string, string it and draw it a few times. Check to see that the string lays back down in the center of the limbs after each draw. Sometimes used bows are slightly twisted and the string "walks" – slowly moves to the edge of the limb. Ultimately it will pop off, usually at full draw!

Your arrows must be wooden shaft with feather fletches. The nocks can be plastic or self nocked. "Self nock" means there is a small groove cut into the back of the shaft for the bow string. This type of nock is usually not repairable if damaged. Plastic nocks can often be "worried" off the shaft and replaced. The arrow points must be of a type that does not destroy the targets. Most archers use field points. If you are shooting into new Saunders mats, a very common thing, you may lose points. They can be replaced. Shaft, fletch, and nock color is left to personal choice. The brighter colors are easier to see down range and in the grass should you miss.

You can get an arm guard and glove or tab at most any sporting goods store. Wallmart usually has all their archery gear on sale after archery hunting season has passed. I prefer a glove. Other archers prefer a tab. Try out both before you buy, if you can.

You should have something to carry your arrows in. A basic quiver is fairly inexpensive but also very easy to make. If you don't have any leather laying about, make a quiver out of heavy fabric like denim, put a strap on it and you have a quiver. It is also a good idea to have a bow stringer until you get very good at the step through method of bow stringing. You can find plans on-line and they are simple to make.

Getting in Shape for Archery

By: THL Christophe of Grey

Getting in Shape For Archery

by The Honorable Christophe of Grey

Well here's an article you would not expect to read in the SCA. No, this is NOT an article on how to sculpt the "body to be admired" or envied. You are on your own with that venture. This is an article on how to get in shape to shoot archery. Let's face it, pulling a 40 or more pound bow long enough to shoot a Royal Round is tiring. That would be 18 pulls at the static ends and possibly 7 – 10 more at the timed end. Do that four or five times in a day and you may be tired. So how do you get in shape?

First, a little history. Many years back there was a fund raising shoot at Pennsic. The objective was to shoot 100 arrows in one day. ALL of the Atlantian archers, who had already been shooting in that day, did the shoot, then went on to shoot some more that day. We in Atlantia love archery and shoot a lot! Not everybody did that. You may think of a word that starts with W and rhymes with blimp, but the point is getting in shape for archery and clearly not everyone on the range that day that signed up for the fund raising shoot were. Years back (not that many) when I started archery I could only shoot about 24 arrows then had to take a break. I started a workout program and now I can shoot any of my bows, I have 14, all day long and not feel tired. So how do you do that without joining a gym and paying lots of money? Simple and I will outline some basic, easy, home exercises that will definitely increase your archery fun.

We are talking about weight training here. If you can afford it, go to Walmart and get a set of the dumbells, 40 pounds. That will be enough for the exercises. If you need more weight you can buy more weights to add to your set. If you don't/can't spend the money use plastic one-gallon milk containers filled with water. Water weights 8 pounds per gallon. You could use sand or gravel or rocks if you would rather for a bit more weight.

The first exercise mimics the drawing action. Place one knee, let's say your left, on a chair or bench. In your right hand you hold the weight. Your right arm is extended full length. Raise your right arm to your shoulder, hold for a count of one and slowly lower to its original position. Do 15 – 20 repetitions. Do the same with your left arm. This is called one set. Do three sets. If you find you can do all 15 – 20 reps easily you need to add more weight. You should actually be straining to finish the final 5 reps on the last set when your weight is right. This exercise works you back muscles that are used to draw your bow and hold the draw.

Next is to build up your shoulders. Holding a weight in each hand, raise your hands from your sides to an upright position over your head but hold your arms straight as you do it. Kinda like you are flapping your arms to get attention. Hold in the upright position for a count of one then slowly lower to original position. Same weight/rep/set as above. Your shoulders are involved in the entire draw, anchor process.

The final archery exercise is to lay on your back with a weight in each hand, arms are fully extended upwards. Slowly lower your hands to your shoulders then raise back up to starting position. This exercise works not only your triceps, the back of your arms which hold your arm out while your bow is in full draw, but your chest muscles which assist in drawing and holding your bow. Same rep/set count as before.

Of course you can add more exercises to these for a more complete workout. What is critically important is to not go fast.

When working out you get the maximum benefit by going slowly and correctly through the exercises. Keep arms straight; go through the exercise as described. If you cheat you are only cheating yourself. As you get stronger you will find your archery improving because you can draw and hold your bow longer and more steady for a good aim and release. You may also need to increase the weight you are using for each exercise.

To add to the benefit of these exercises you should finish off each exercise session with a protein drink. The body uses protein to build muscle, what it doesn't use, it gets rid of.

Carbohydrates are stored by the body, i.e. fat, and are great for fast action needs, i.e. running. My favorite protein drink is milk, one scoop of protein powder and one tablespoon of peanut butter. Put it in a blender or shaker and it's highly palatable. If you want even more protein, add some kefir, watery yogurt. Good stuff. You can add a banana to the blender for

Getting in Shape for Archery

an even more beneficial after workout drink. If you drink a protein drink after working out you will NOT feel stiff and sore the next day.

If you don't want to go the route of a protein drink, drink a glass of chocolate milk. Yes, Virginia, chocolate milk. It will help your body repair the damage working out does, which causes your body to get stronger. You should workout every other day. The in-between days allow your body to repair and build up the muscle the exercises broke down. Working out every day actually tears down muscles.

None of this is designed to condition us to shoot a true war bow with a draw weight of 100 – 190 pounds. There simply is no reason to shoot a bow of that poundage in the SCA. The farthest you will shoot at any event/war is 100 yards. SAAD may require you to shoot 135 yards. But any 30 pound bow set up correctly can fling an arrow that distance. But if you adopt this simple suggested workout routine you WILL find your Royal Round scores improving and your general archery improving.

As said before, archery is a physical activity that requires muscles. Work those muscles and get them in shape and you will be more successful and have more fun.

Shoot straight, THL Christophe of Grey

By: Lady of Bree Pye of Caer Galen

Handbow vs. Crossbow

By: THL Christophe of Grey

Handbow vs. Crossbow

by The Honorable Christophe of Grey

Thus far in this series I have focused primarily on the handbow. There is always a "discussion" about crossbows versus handbows. Which is better, which shoots better, should crossbows and handbows shoot against each other. Which has an advantage over the other.

First, let's set the record straight. In the 10 years Atlantia has had an archery champion two used longbows, five used recurves and three used crossbows. Looking at the Atlantian Royal Round scores currently there are five names in the Grand Bowman Elite class, four crossbowmen, one recurve (also in this group using a crossbow). So who has the advantage?

Some may argue that handbows require more skill to use than a crossbow. With a handbow you have elevation as well as right and left aiming issues all while holding back the string. With a crossbow you also have the left/right and elevation issues but you are not stressed by holding back the string. You are more relaxed during the aiming process. Also according to Atlantian rules, crossbows may have rear sights while handbows may not. However, handbows may have range marks on the limbs. Some cross bowmen sit while others stand, hand bowmen stand while shooting. Again who has the advantage?

When shooting static, untimed rounds cross bowmen typically score better than hand bowmen. In timed rounds typically hand bowmen out score cross bowmen. When shooting a clout shot, 100 yards out, often hand bowmen have an advantage over cross bowmen because they can lob the arrows into the clout whereas cross bows typically have a very flat trajectory. Again, who has the advantage?

So it seems the question of which bow is better is a lot like the question "Is that 12 items or a dozen?" I personally have out shot crossbowmen more than once in competitions, some timed, some not. In the archery community it is generally accepted that the reason there seems to be an advantage for crossbowmen has little to do with the actual weapon but all to do with the archer. Crossbows worth shooting are not cheap. An archer that owns a good crossbow has spent a fair amount of money for their weapon and are typically fairly serious about shooting AND shoot the weapon a lot. If a handbowman is using an equivalently expensive handbow they will most likely shoot it a lot. In archery, the more you shoot the better you become. So the generally accepted bottom line is that crossbowmen are more serious and shoot more. This does not mean archers who use handbows are not serious archers. It does say that ANY archer who is using a quality weapon is most likely a serious archer.

All that said, there are other reasons for choosing a crossbow over a handbow. Some archers simply cannot pull a bow over 20 pounds draw weight; shoulder injuries or other physical restrictions. Any bow with a higher poundage shoots a flatter trajectory and typically a more accurate shaft. It is easier to cock a higher poundage cross bow than hold the draw on a higher poundage handbow. Ladies tend to choose crossbows for a variety of reasons but the two main ones seem to be you don't have to hold the draw and, uh, well, it's just a fact, anatomical reasons. So which bow is best? The one you feel most comfortable with and shoot the most.

By: Lady of Bree Pye of Caer Galen

Bow and Buckler Competition

By: Sir Jon Fitz Rauf, RCA, RCY

Bow and Buckler Competition

by Sir Jon Fitz-Rauf, R.C.A., R.C.Y.

The Bow and Buckler competition provides both practice for combat archers in hitting a small target and in avoiding incoming arrows. It is a contest between teams of two partners. Each of the team members take turns attempting to shoot the buckler held by the other partner. The distance is increased each end until both partners are eliminated and only one team remains.

All participants must wear, both while shooting or buckler bearing, full Light Combat protective gear. The buckler is twelve inches maximum in diameter. The surface may be of any color and may also be padded to reduced damage to arrows. Any SCA combat legal blunt or bow may be used.

A handicapping system is used. Archers scoring less than sixty in the Royal Round get four arrows per end. Archers scoring sixty to seventy nine get three arrows per end. Archers scoring eighty or more get two arrows per end. Teams may be composed of the same or of mixed levels.

The archer that shoots first, stands at the shooting line and the partner starts ten yards away, facing the shooting line with their body perpendicular to it. (For a more challenging event they may stand parallel to it, providing greater chance for kills.) The buckler must always be held level with the center of the chest until the arrow is released. After the arrow is released the buckler bearer may either remain still, move the buckler to intercept the arrow or dodge to avoid being hit or any combination of the above. However, at no time, may he/she move their feet. Moving the feet to avoid an arrow is considered a hit and the buckler bearer must then kneel on both knees. Moving the feet in order to intercept the arrow with the buckler is considered a miss, even if the arrow hits the buckler. Each archer continues shooting until they either hit the buckler, "kill" their partner (A hit on the leg or arm does not stop the shooting) or use up all their allotted arrows. However for a more dramatic effect, the archers on the line may take turns shooting only one arrow at a time.

Hits to the buckler bearer count as in combat. Glancing arrows do not count, it must be a solid hit. Hits to the head or torso count as a kill and the archer stops shooting. Dramatic deaths by the buckler bearers are encouraged. A hit to the leg and the buckler bearer may either kneel or stand on the unhit leg. A hit to the arm holding the buckler and the holder must switch it to the other hand. If both arms have been hit the buckler must be held at chest level and may not be moved. Hits to buckler bearer do not carry over. If a limb is lost in one end it is back in the next.

When all the archers have finished shooting, they change places with their buckler bearers and the second end begins. After the second end is over, those teams that did not have at least one hit to the buckler are eliminated. The distance is now increased by at least five yards. This continues until only the winning team is left.

Teaching Archery to Children

By: Magnus Malleus, OL

Teaching Archery to Children

by Magnus Malleus, O.L.

So you want to teach children archery. Lets talk safety.

As someone who used to compete in collegiate and tournament archery in the 60's and early 70's and who was an NAA trained instructor who taught various summer camps' counselors and YMCA archery classes I have a little advice.

Children aren't adults, and an archery class is more than one. Start with a short safety class. Show them how. Some will watch. Remember the short attention spans. Don't take too long. Explain the rules, and explain how, but they need to shoot soon.

Explain how you are going to use a whistle When they can shoot and that it means Stop too. Medievalists can make a wooden one. Having more than one adult supervising is a very good idea.

Show them how to nock and shelf the arrows. Some will do better with tabs, some will do better with gloves. Explain how to sight, what an anchor point is, aiming over the arrow, and how to stand. Demonstrate. Then help them try it.

Shoot on a whistle, make them ALL put down the bows and WALK to the target at the same time together. Look for the one you missed.

** DON'T leave extra arrows behind when you go forward. **

Teach them to watch for arrows sticking up in the grass in front of them as they go forward.

Demonstrate how to pull arrows from the target (eyes, also a reason not to run_to_the target). One child to a target at a time. Two children can mean one is jerking arrows out of the target while one is standing impatiently behind. Teach them to pull out the arrows with their thumb towards the target, not the bottom of their fist, that breaks and bends arrows, but it's natural to them. They should stand to the side of the arrows when pulling them. This must be taught. Arrows can come out with sizable force. Even at the one pulling them.

They must ALL walk back together as well, you don't want any used as targets for any overenthusiastic who ran back early. Look for the one you missed. Then shoot again. Use the whistle.

Arrow lengths are extremely important. Too long is far safer than too short. They can overdraw and shatter the shaft behind the bow on release, possibly into an arm. Adults have done this.

Check the draw lengths of the children with the arrows. Some will overdraw in front of their chests. An arrow should be longer than they can reach the tip of with both hands placing the nock at their chest center. Ideally all arrows will be longer than the class requires. Short arrows can be used by the wrong child.

Teach them to rotate their bow elbow to the outside. It prevents bruising. Keep extra long armguards for some. Some arms overbend naturally to the inside.

Watch them as they shoot. Try to coach each one as you can. Some will need you to check for dominant eyes. Have them hold both hands out in front of them and make a small window, then bring their hands back to their face while they are looking at something. That will tell you which is their dominant eye. In some cases it actually helps to use some cheap eyepatches from the drugstore to correct the cross dominant problem. They're happier if they can actually learn to hit something.

In order to help them shoot I taught some of them to use a simple sight constructed with surgical tape and headed pins. The tape is simply stuck to the back of the bow and the pin in it. Point of aim can be difficult for them to grasp or teach to them. This isn't the Interkingdom Archery Rounds. Use what you can.

If you can afford it, do like I did and provide all the equipment but the targets yourself. Then you know it is safer because you will check it yourself. Expect some losses. Keep a repair kit.

Once I took over a YMCA class that had been overseen by two young teens in an underprivileged neighborhood. The first thing I did was to sit them down and give a safety talk. We shot the first round and several of them ran at the targets. I went forward to stop them in time. While showing some of them how to pull out arrows safely I happened to turn around and three of them were at full draw right at the rest of us. Familiarity bred careless-

Teaching Archery to Children

ness. There had been no real supervision before. Dumb luck had protected them I guess.

After that there were a few changes. Expect the unexpected. Some children are going to be different than you might expect.

One I knew, but never taught, actually shot his brother in the back trying to kill him, and almost succeeded. This was at home.

As wonderful a sport as it is, some children simply will not safely

handle archery gear around others. I HAD to learn to exclude some. I was enthusiastic too. Some parents don't teach discipline. Some children are unusual. Safety comes first. Teach it.

Magnus Malleus, O.L.

Target-less Practice

By: Sir Jon Fitz Rauf, OL, OP, RCA, RCY

Target-less Practice

by Sir Jon Fitz-Rauf, West O. L., O.P., R.C.A., R.C.Y.

It is often difficult for archers to find a place to practice their archery skills at home since many of us do not have fields, large back yards or driveways to use or we can not go outside to shoot because of inclement weather. However, there is a way to practice, improve your skills and stay in condition even if you live in a small apartment in town.

In the past and even today, handbow archers in the Near to Far East, as well as the West have made use of tightly packed straw and other materials as a backstop for their arrows while practicing their form. In Arabic countries this was called a torba and in Japan it was called a makiwara. This is done up close and without a target at which to aim. In some Eastern countries beginning archers might spend months just practicing their, stance, bow grip, nocking, drawing, holding and release before ever shooting at a target. This practice was often done only five or six feet from the surface that was stopping their arrows.

One of the major keys to accurate shooting is consistency. If your grip, draw, anchor or release vary from shot to shot, then where your arrows strikes will also vary. To obtain consistency you must learn correct form and practice it. You should try to practice at least three times per week and if possible once a day. You should try for a hour a day, either in a straight hour or in two or three shorter segments that add up to at least an hour. However, if you only have a chance to practice once or twice a month, you will be a long time in achieving consistency and thereby accuracy. Archery is so much more fun if you can hit what you are aiming at, at least part of the time.

One of the methods used in Eastern countries was a barrel filled with tightly packed straw. This was placed on a stand so the center of the open front of the barrel was at the shoulder level of the archer's shoulder, then the arrows were shot into this, pulled and shot again and again. Current Western practice of the same technique sometimes makes use of a target mat or a bag or cardboard box packed firmly with old plastic trash or grocery bags. These can stop target or hunting arrows from even heavy bows and you can easily remove the arrows from the material. However, setting something like this up in your hallway or front room takes up space and might look rather strange to your friends or landlord.

There is a way to do this that is easy to set up and takes little space and little explanation to visitors. You will need: An old blanket, a pole or narrow board to hang it over, a doorway or hall and some soft plastic small game blunts or combat blunts. The basic idea is that you hang a old blanket, with no holes in it, over a horizontal pole, so that there is a double layer. You hang the pole in a door or hallway. You then remove the target point from one arrow and replace it with a blunt, step back about six feet from the blanket, nock and draw your arrow, loose and watch the arrow strike the blanket and fall to the floor at your feet.

First the blanket. Any blanket with a close weave will do. I would not recommend one of the thermal blankets with a loose weave. And it should not be too heavy, the arrow should be able to lose energy gradually by moving the blanket backward.

Next you need a means to suspend the blanket. One way to do this is to use one of the expanding shower curtain rods. Just be sure that it will fit in your door or hall way. This can also be set up in a garage or outdoors if convenient. If your door or hallway is too narrow for the shower rod, you can get two small screw hooks and place them in the top of your doorway and hang a length of plastic pipe, a wooden 1 by 2 inch board or whatever is convenient, which is a little more narrow than your doorway from cord. You should hang the support pole as high as possible so that your arrow will hit near the center of the fabric. This is because if your arrow strikes too near the top there is not enough movement to absorb the energy of the arrow. You should fold the fabric over the pole so that it hangs about equally on both sides. This provides more weight for the arrow to move and affords protection if you should wear a hole in the front layer. To prevent wearing a hole in the blanket you should change sides each time you hang it up.

You will need to purchase some blunt tips. The 3/4 inch diameter HTM small game blunts can be found at most archery shops or on-line. They are close in weight to a field tip

Target-less Practice

and will cause only little change to the feel and balance of your arrow as you nock it. If you have an arrow in your set that does not group well with the others, you may use it by removing the metal point. If the shaft was tapered under the point you will need to cut it flat. This will cause a shorting of the shaft by about a half inch. If you want to keep the exact length you may need to purchase a new arrow without a point and then measure and cut it to the correct length. Glue and/or tape the blunt on so that there is no chance of it coming off. You can use an arrow that is not closely matched in spine or weight to your target set for this, but it should match in length and nock type so that the feel of handling it will remain the same.

I shall not go into what is correct form, for that is not the purpose of this article. If you want information on form there are many available books and videos on the subject as well as experienced archers that can assist you.

If you want to practice your form for combat archery you can just use an existing combat arrow. But, you should wear a minimum of your helmet and hand protection while practicing so you will be able to have your anchor in the appropriate place and so that the handling the bow and the arrow will be the same as in combat. You should also shoot from the different stances that you would use in combat after you have settled your basic form.

Before you start shooting you should make sure that the top limb of your bow will not strike your ceiling.

You should shoot no more than three arrows in a row so that you take the time to think about how you are shooting and do not get into a rut where you are not analyzing what you are doing. You can make up a full set of arrows with the blunts and they can be used to practice speed shooting for timed ends such as are used in the R.R. or I.K.A.C. .

In this style of practice you are not trying to hit a specific point, you are trying to improve and practice good form. You should concentrate on your stance, draw, anchor, release and follow through. You should not think about hitting a particular point. In fact you may find that it works best for you to close your eyes and just use your mind's eye for part of the practice.

The main point of this is that you have no distraction of trying to hit the target. You concentrate only on improving your form and its consistency. You need to go through your own mental check off list point by point from stance to follow through. Just as often happens in target shooting on the field, you will learn to know by the feel when you have put everything together correctly and know the arrow would be going into the gold as soon as you release. After each shot you should stop and review what you have done before picking up the arrow and shooting again.

This works best for archers that already have the basics of shooting learned correctly. If you are just beginning to learn to shoot you need a knowledgeable archer to observe your shooting and correct any errors in form or technique. For you do not want to practice and ingrain poor form or technique.

If possible, place the blanket so that when you are in front of it, you can see yourself in a mirror on the string hand side and observe your form. This will be most helpful for part of the practice. What is also very useful, if you have one, is a video camera. You can place it on a tripod to tape your entire practice from the string hand side. You can then play back the entire practice and observe your form and learn where it may need improvement.

This also has the side benefit of keeping your shooting muscles in condition so that you will not get out of shape over the winter or tire when shooting in long competitions.

However, if you have the space inside your dwelling so that you can get further from the blanket, if you wish, you can shoot at a very small target object placed on the blanket. This should be done after you have put in your full time with the target-less practice.

Defensive Combat Archery Techniques

By: Sir Jon Fitz Rauf, RCA, RCY

Defensive Combat Archery Techniques

by Sir Jon Fitz-Rauf, R.C.A., R.C.Y.

As a combat archer usually your only defense against incoming arrows is a good eye and fast reflexes. However there are examples from the history of archery in warfare that you as a SCA combat archer can use.

The Assyrians along with having the advantage of iron weapons over their bronze using opponents, made highly effective use of archery in war. The bow was a primary weapon and of major importance in their battles. Unlike the armies of Medieval Europe they provided protection for their archers. This protection was in the form of teams of shieldmen that were responsible for stopping incoming arrows. Early on these shieldmen were one or two men with round shields (approximately 24 TO 30 inch), swords and spears. Or later one man with a tall matlet of reeds, which curved back at the top to provide further protection against descending arrows. This shield bearer was armed and there was often a spearman as well in the team. These were highly effective fighting units both in offense and defense.

This technique can be put to effective use in some of our SCA battles. The combination of one or two shield bearing heavies and an archer can provide protection for the archer from the missiles of enemy lights, allowing him to stay alive longer and take out more fighters, thus protecting his heavies. Heavies attacking this unit can be held by your heavies while you fall back shooting or flank them.

The combination of a lightly armored heavy, javeliner with a pavise and archer creates an effective unit for both offense or defense. The shield and armor of the heavy and the pavise of the javeliner provide protection from missiles for all. While allowing the archer to concentrate on shooting. By using a lightly armored heavy the unit still remains fast and mobile. If attacked by heavies your heavy fights on the defense while the javeliner and archer support him with their missiles. Or if outnumbered they have the speed to fall back rapidly to a protected position.

But the major advantage of this is keeping you alive and shooting for as long as possible, allowing you to reduce the opposing ranks.

Another system of protection used by the Byzantines and the Arabs was the use of a shield on the bow arm. This approximately eighteen inch diameter round shield was strapped to the bow arm leaving the hand free to handle the bow. It provides protection from arrows that you do not see coming, as well as giving an active defense against those that you do see. In lights only battles with boffer or shanai, if allowed, the shield rim can be padded with pipe insulation and used to block sword blows.

For mixed battles, do not wear a shield that could be easily mistaken for the shield of a heavy. You should limit it to the size of a buckler and it should also place the Light Combat symbol on it.

Leonardo da Vinci had an idea for an archer's shield in one of his notebooks. This round shield was about twenty four inches across and had an opening in the center to shoot through and was attached to the bow. A SCA version of this can be made from three eights inch plywood secured to a fiberglass bow with U-brackets. Do not make this too large or you may find the weight awkward.

As an archer you maintain a good defense by: 1) Being aware of what is happening around you. 2) Keeping your concentration on the enemy. 3) Making use of your mobility to maintain the distance you want between you and your target. 4) Using your speed to get to where you are needed or to fall back if overrun. 5) Not looking down at your bow when nocking an arrow. 6) Never dodging in the same predictable direction to avoid arrows (Do not dodge only to the right or left, vary your movement). 7) Making use of cover, both natural, artificial and fighters. 8) Avoiding coming back up in the same predictable place when shooting from behind cover, such as castle or shield walls. 9) Avoiding being shot at from several directions at the same time.

An Archer must be:
Keen of eye,
sure of hand,
fleet of foot,
canny of mind.

Trouble Shooting

By: THL Christophe of Grey

Trouble Shooting

by The Honorable Christophe of Grey

You tuned your bow, you categorized your arrows for accuracy, you practice your technique often and consistently AND YOU STILL ARE NOT IMPROVING! Frustrating. Welcome to the world of archery. Let's talk about trouble shooting common archery problems.

"The arrow falls off the arrow rest when I draw." This happens due to the mechanics of a bow. When you draw the string back, it forms an increasingly sharper angle resulting in your draw fingers pinching the arrow nock. There is a torque in this motion that translates into pulling the arrow off the arrow rest. When you grip the string make sure your fingers are loose about the arrow nock. As you draw back they will naturally tighten around the nock.

By: Lady of Bree Pye of Caer Galen

Arrows hitting high or low. The problem here is that the nock end of the arrow is either high or low for your aim. Inconsistent anchoring changes the rear sight on each shot. Develop a consistent anchor point and stick with it. Are you nocking the arrow snug against the bottom of the nocking point on the bow string? Some archers choose to nock above. Either way, pick one and be consistent. You should also be holding your bow with your hand in the center of the bow, top to bottom. If your hand is not centered, the bow limbs flex inconsistently which changes the energy transferred to the bow string.

The pressure of the bow should be evenly spread along the palm of your bow hand. If too much heel pressure, arrows go high. Raising or dropping your bow upon release will cause high or low arrows. The arrow is actually still in contact with the bow just after release. Any movement of your bow affects the flight of the arrow.

If you lean into your draw, moving your head forward to meet your draw hand, your arrows will go low. This technique reduces the draw length and the amount of power stored in the bow limbs. Conversely, if you draw past your anchor point to your shoulder, non-horse bow, your arrows will go high. More energy, more arrow speed, arrows hit high.

Left or right arrow hits are common on recurve bows that use an arrow rest and the bow is not held vertical while aiming. Hold your bow hand out with index finger pointed at the target. Rotate your hand. Your aiming point does not change. Now raise the thumb of your bow hand and use the top tip of your thumb as the aiming point. Rotate your hand and watch your aiming point rotate. Also if you pull your draw hand away from your anchor point, that is, away from your body, upon release you pull the back of the arrow with it. This can result in the arrow "swimming" down range and hitting right or left.

Conversely, if the bowstring hits your arm, chest, or clothing upon release it can also cause the arrow to hit right or left as the string is deflected from its normal path. A bowstring hitting clothing also takes some energy out of the string often causing arrows to hit low or fall short.

Officers

Seneschal
seneschal@dragonsspine.org
Don Gianni Sangermano

Exchequer
reeve@dragonsspine.org
Lady Abigail MacNaught

Knight Marshal
marshal@dragonsspine.org
Lord Turlough

Rapier Marshal
rapier@dragonsspine.org
Lord Antoine Francesco

Deputy: Max Nelson

Archery Captain—accepting applications
archery@dragonsspine.org
Bernard
Deputies: Lady Aicelina de Navarra
Lord Tiberius Aicilius Brutus (Thrown Weapons)

Minister of Arts & Sciences
arts@dragonsspine.org
Lydia of the Pines

Scalene Pursuivant
pennytegen@yahoo.com
herald@dragonsspine.org
Duchess Selene of the Sky
Deputies:
Lady Liliona Ruth Hampton
Lord Seamus MacRae
Court/Voice—As appointed by the B&B

Chatelaine
newcomers@dragonsspine.org
Lady Iullianna (Cricket)

Gold Key (accepting applications)

Quartermaster (accepting applications)

Chronicler
chronicler@dragonsspine.org
Madame Adelaisa Bernois
Deputy: Lady Viola di Luca

Minister of the Web
web@dragonsspine.org
Lady Viola di Luca
Deputy: Madame Adelaisa Bernois

Scribe
scribe@dragonsspine.org
THL Aildhcinna MacAilpean

Minister of the Lists
mol@dragonsspine.org
Master Duncan

Baronial Court

Baron and Baroness

Baron Broddi hornebrjotr
(mka Scott Webber)
baron@dragonsspine.org

Baronness Mael Mide ingen Domnaill
(mka Melissa Webber)
baroness@dragonsspine.org

Head of Household

- Lady Jeanette du Vallier

Ladies in Waiting

- Lady Elora von Effyn;
  Head Lady-in-Waiting
- Lady Isabeau de Bernac
- Lady Samantha Kennington
- Madame Adelaisa Bernois
- Lady Abigail MacNaught
- Lady Isabella Francesco
- Lady Viola di Luca

Captains of the Guard

- Don Antoine de Vallier
- Master Thorsinn Vandringsmann

Guard

- Lord Connal Mac an Druaidh
- Lord Maxamillian Kern
- Lord Seamus McRay
- Lady Veronica Francesco

Court Herald

- Accepting Applications—see
  Their Excellencies

Champions

- Heavy: THLord Sixtus Goetz
- Rapier: Don Seamus McRay
- Archery: Lord Bernard
- Shield of Chivalry: Lady Veronica Francesco

Largesse Coordinator

- Madame Adelaisa Bernois

Who Are We?

The Barony of Dragonsspine is a local chapter of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. (SCA), within the Kingdom of the Outlands.

The SCA is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to learning more about the Middle Ages through reenactment. There are SCA chapters worldwide and they hold regular feasts, tournaments, balls and battles.

The Outlands includes New Mexico, Colorado and parts of Texas and Wyoming.

Dragonsspine includes El Paso County, Colorado—centered on Colorado Springs, CO.

Wherever you are, we're a friendly group of people, so why not visit us all?

We're on the Web at:

www.dragonsspine.outlands.org

We're also on Facebook as

Barony of Dragonsspine

Join our Yahoo group here

Disclaimer & Copyright

This is the Meiassas Dragon, an electronic publication of The Barony of Dragonsspine of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. It is not a corporate publication of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. and does not delineate SCA policies.

Copyright © 2014 Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. For information on reprinting articles, artwork, or photographs from this publication, please contact the Chronicler, who will assist you in contacting the original creator of the piece. Please respect the legal rights of our contributors.

Thanks and Credits

All artwork or creative works have been used with permission and according to their Terms of Use.

All photography, unless otherwise noted, by Madame Adelaisa Bernois.

Artwork for group heraldic devices by Emma de Fetherstan (Jennifer Smith).

Artwork for officers' badges by Chiara Francesca Arianna d'Onofrio (Francesca V. Havas).

Would you like your photos, puzzles, articles or stories included in a future edition of Meiassis Dragon?? Contact the chronicler at chronicler@dragonsspine.org